



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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McLean County Health Department Dental Clinic Expands Services

BLOOMINGTON— A \$100,000 grant awarded to the McLean County Health Department Dental Clinic by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services last year has allowed for the expansion of the dental clinic's services. The opening of a fourth operatory resulted in serving more than 400 additional children in 2011. A second hygienist was also added to the staff that provides preventative services to children.

The Dental Clinic received the \$100,000 grant in March 2011, allowing the clinic to add a fourth dental operatory by transforming a former waiting room. Plans are moving forward to install digital imaging in all the operatories. The dental clinic is in the process of purchasing computers and software, as well as training staff, to convert to electronic dental records. The addition of the fourth dental operatory in August 2011 allowed the clinic to serve 422 more children in 2011 than in 2010, a 6.3 percent increase in service—further meeting the dental needs of county residents with Medicaid or without private insurance.

Of the nearly 23,000 county residents who have Medicaid coverage for health and dental care, more than 13,000 are children. The MCHD Dental Clinic serves as primary provider for children on Medicaid, as no other dental practice in the county routinely accepts Medicaid as a funding source.

"Anything we can do to improve services is a step toward improved oral health for residents," Susan Albee, R.N. Community Health Services Supervisor, said. "We will continue to pursue options for adding new services with a focus on optimal oral health for low-income county residents."

The MCHD Dental Clinic is celebrating February as National Children's Dental Health Month. Parents in McLean County are encouraged to instill good dental hygiene habits in their children at an early age. Baby teeth are important for chewing food and speaking properly. To protect your child's teeth:

- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle or sippy-cup filled with milk, formula, juice or sweetened drink or even sleep at night at the breast. If your child must have a bottle to sleep, fill it with plain drinking water.
- Do not dip a pacifier in honey, syrup or anything with sugar, such as soda pop, fruit juice, Kool-Aid, sugar water, milk or formula.

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- Clean your baby's teeth after each feeding and before bedtime with a clean washcloth, gauze pad or a soft infant toothbrush.
- Teach your child to drink from a cup by 6 months of age and be weaned by 1 year.
- Be sure your child visits a dentist before 2 years of age. Schedule a checkup with your child's dentist every six months.

The MCHD Dental Clinic serves eligible children and adults by appointment only. Clients must meet financial requirements and be residents of McLean County. The clinic provides preventative and restorative dental services four days a week to children ages 3 to 19 years. Services include exams, X-rays, fluoride treatments, cleanings, fillings, extractions, dental sealants and preventative education. The once-a-week adult dental clinic is limited to pain-control measures, including exams, fillings, X-rays, extractions and preventative education.

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